Rt. 8 Frederick, Md. 21701
8/14/72

Mr. Jim Millstone
Post-Dispatch
St. Louis, Mo.

Dear Mr. Millstone,

When I was in St. Louis in mid-May neither you nor Manny Chaits nor Ed Thornton had much time, so our communication was rather sketchy. I was then primarily interested in collecting information for use in affidavits in support of James Earl Ray's habeas corpus petition, which is now being prepared, and in certain somewhat mysterious and potentially incredibly repressive aspects of the case of his brother John, Leavenworth, #86798.

Robert A. Hampe, 7W7, 621-1701, told me his research for the petition he ultimately filed for cert. before the U.S.Supreme Court showed the issues in John's case were without legal precedent. He confirmed what I have gathered in talking to John that if the court of appeals decision is affirmed, it has repressive potential almost without limit for admittedly illegally-seized evidence, particularly its use against those with whom it is not connected. However, Hampe has not provided the requested copies of the decision and the petition cert. They are not easy to come by when I live in a rural area, hence I can't supply them to you. With all the reporting of the administration's efforts to, in effect, rewrite parts of the Constitution, if this case is anything like represented to me, I think the press has missed a major story.

Mr. Chaits told me he planned to leave your paper. Instead of writing him and asking that this letter be forwarded, I am writing it to you with the same request, in the hope you can find time to read it, for your information or for any suggestions you may be able to make.

When I told Mr. Chaits I am without doubt that not only did James not do the shooting but that this was impossible, he told me he and a colleague, unidentified, had developed their own theory. He promised to speak to his friend and be in touch. I haven't heard from him on this and I would like to, very much. He also had the advantage of access to a number of principles in the case, as reflected in his stories. I think it is not unlikely that defense counsel would like to ask for an affidavit from him, related solely to what he did report and was published and, I'm confident, not involving confidentiality.The purpose would be to support statements I have obtained independently of other prior to seeing his stories.

If he is one of the reporters who phoned Percy Foreman after the minitrial, his account of the character of the conversation could have some value of the same nature. I have statements from those who were with Foreman in his room when these calls came in. Likewise, if Chaits heard accounts from other reporters, knowing who they are could be helpful.As you and he can readily see, these simple things do not transgress the (proper) traditions, do not in any sense involve breaches of confidences, protection of sources, etc.

John's case seems close to hopeless because of the deficiences of the record in the court below. There was no real preparation of any defense. But the precedent can be very hurtful to the kinds of people not charged in bank robberies. John seems to think that Chaits interviewed or knows something about a prisoner originally moved into the same cell with John, I believe beginning with St. Charles. This man was known variously as Gerald Carmel, Jessie Springler and Joe Spring. He was allegedly involved in an airplane crash in the Gulf of Mexico, was picked up by a shrimp boat and (also allegedly) was moved without seeming need or logic to a series of jails, said to include one in Arizona, Houston, Atlanta and Springfield, in addition to St. Charles. John told me he seemed to know more about John than John did. He also reports what he identifies as no more than a prison grapevine rumor that this man was also placed in a jail cell with a man (unreportedly) arrested for possible complicity with James. If Chaits has any recollection of information on this, no matter how sketchy, it also could be of some help.

Thanks you both for anything you may be able to do.

Sincerely, Harold Weisberg